

HARIJAN

Editor : MAHADEV DESAI

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[FIVE PICE

A HISTORIC MEETING

Why in Calcutta?

So much has appeared in the press about the possibility of Gandhiji meeting the Generalissimo of China, that a few facts must be placed before the reader. The very first intimation of the Generalissimo's desire to see Gandhiji at Sevagram was received from Pandit Jawaharlal. The next intimation came from the Deputy Commissioner at Wardha who had received a message from the Governor to go and enquire of Gandhiji if he would meet the Generalissimo. Gandhiji was expecting to hear about the date of the distinguished visitor's coming. But after this nothing was heard of the visit until Pandit Jawaharlal informed us that for some reasons beyond the Generalissimo's control the visit could not come off, that he would be the last man to think of troubling Gandhiji to go to Delhi, and that it would be with the deepest regret that he would have to go away without seeing him. Thereupon Gandhiji sent a letter to General Chiang Kai-shek expressing his willingness to go to any place in India, and also sent a telegram to the same effect. The Deputy Commissioner at Wardha was all the while asking me when the guest was coming! And I kept on telling him that I was no less ignorant than he. At last when we had almost given the thing up, came a message from Jawaharlalji to the effect that General Chiang Kai-shek could not possibly go away without seeing Gandhiji, and asking me if Gandhiji could possibly go to Shantiniketan where the Generalissimo was expected to arrive on the 18th. This, I said, was impossible, for Gandhiji had to be back for the important meeting of Jamnalalji's friends that Gandhiji had called on the 20th to consider the ways and means of continuing his great work. Then Pandit Jawaharlalji suggested Calcutta. Gandhiji immediately agreed, and he said he would gladly perform the 48 hours' journey, if only to have five or six precious hours with the Hero of China.

That is how the meeting came about. We were staying in Birla Park where the Generalissimo and his distinguished wife were good enough to call on Gandhiji within an hour of his arrival. The plan was to have a sort of 'courtesy' meeting and then for both to meet again in the afternoon. "I would not think of asking you to come to the Government House," said the Generalissimo. "We would come again, after you have had your meal and rest." "But," said Gandhiji, "I have had my meal on the train in order to give you the whole of my

time here, and I would suggest, if it were not inconvenient to you, to stay here, have an Indian meal with us, and we can then talk until the minute of my departure. We can thus save the time of going to and coming back from Barrackpore." And so the guests stayed, gave the Birla sons the honour of a meal in their house, and talked with Gandhiji until the moment of his departure for the station.

The Unique Pair

There are few pairs comparable in history to the Chiangs. The Generalissimo is of humble birth. He went to Japan when nineteen for military training, entered the Military Staff College, is said to have served several years in the Japanese army. It was in Japan that he met the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the maker of free China, who gave him the revolutionary inspiration. His life may be said to have been dedicated to working for the Chinese Revolution and the freedom of China since then. He entered for a time into business, but by 1925 was Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Kuomintang, and "when Dr. Sun Yat-sen died, he assumed office as Commander of the nationalist army."

I cannot go into the history of the Generalissimo's efforts to unify China and to prepare the country for an indomitable endeavour to fight Japan's aggression. The bare facts of his life I have taken from Gunther's *Inside Asia*, but I hesitate to adopt his version of the General's career of unification by conquest and the "ten weary years of civil war", for the simple reason that I have had no opportunity of verifying and checking the facts.

The Generalissimo married the Madame, a distinguished daughter of the famous Soong family, in 1927. Madame Chiang, the daughter of a Methodist, has taken all her education in America, and thus functions as the interpreter for her husband who knows no foreign language except Japanese. But she is very much more than his interpreter. She has been his trusted adviser and faithful companion in all that the Generalissimo has passed through. Great is his devotion to her. Reference must be made, even in this scrappy account of their career, to the heroic part played by both in what is known as the Sian episode, in which the General was kidnapped and imprisoned by Chang Hsueh-liang at Sian where the General had gone to investigate into something going amiss. Chang Hsueh-liang, known as the Young Marshal, had been asked by the Generalissimo to fight the Communists. Instead he flirted and fraternised with them, and when he was called to account by the

Generalissimo, the latter found himself surrounded and imprisoned. The Generalissimo "refused to eat, refused to talk, refused to listen." The dialogue between the captor and the captive has been recorded by the Generalissimo in his own diary. Said the captor: "If Your Excellency accepts my suggestions, I shall obey your orders."

The captive replied: "Which are you, my subordinate or my enemy? If my subordinate, you should obey my orders. If you are my enemy, you should kill me without delay. You should choose either of the two steps, but say nothing more, for I will not listen to you."

Then the captor said: "I think you are the only great man of this age, but why won't you yield a little, comply with our requests, and lead us on in this revolution so that we may achieve something instead of your merely sacrificing your life?"

To which the Generalissimo replied: "If I stand firm and would rather sacrifice my life than compromise my principles, I shall be able to maintain my integrity till death, and my spirit will live for ever."

Whilst this drama was being enacted in Sian, the Madame was pleading with the Kuomintang Generals to be patient and not to attempt to crush the mutiny by force. Donald, the Chiangs' Australian adviser, and the Madame were concerned not so much in freeing the Generalissimo as in keeping the forces in check. If these had not been kept in check, the mutiny might have been crushed but the Generalissimo might also have been lost for ever to the Revolution. She "fought on two feet like a man", keeping throughout her wonderful presence of mind, and acting with cool courage and tact which sometimes become the essence of non-violence. She flew to Sian, delivered herself into the hands of her husband's captor, putting him on his honour, and had her husband honourably released. The husband would sign no terms. He had written to her: "I will never allow myself to do anything to make my wife ashamed of me or become unworthy of being a follower of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Since I was born for the Revolution I will gladly die for the same cause. I will return my body unspotted to my parents." When at last she went and rescued him, he exclaimed in the words of Jeremiah: "Jehovah will now do a new thing, and that is, He will make a woman protect a man." (Let me say in passing that the Generalissimo was a Buddhist. When he was courting Madame his suit was rejected because he was not a Christian. But he said that was the last thing he would do since he should fall in her estimation by changing one's religion for the sake of gaining her hand; he would study Christianity seriously and then would adopt it if he felt inner conversion. The plea told, and it was three years after marriage that he became a Christian.)

The Generalissimo has tremendous self-introspection. Like Gandhiji he often blames himself for the shortcomings of his followers, and he indeed assumed responsibility for the mutineers who imprisoned him at Sian. And after honourable release

by the mutineers who later begged his pardon, the Generalissimo repeatedly offered his resignation.

The character of the Generalissimo's heroism during his single-handed mortal combat with Japan is very well known. English historians usually disdain to think of an oriental hero's military achievements with respect and admiration. But China's four years' heroic struggle has begun to extort their admiration, maybe because China is now their ally. "Japan's invasion of China," writes Mr. A. G. Gardiner, "was the first great move in the drama. She had torn up the Nine Power Treaty which guaranteed the integrity of China, and neither Britain nor the United States—which like Japan herself were signatories to that Treaty—lifted a finger to save China... Japan thought she had a walk-over..... Instead a miracle happened—the greatest miracle of this war, perhaps in its effect the most pregnant miracle in history—China did not collapse in three months. Her Government did not surrender, her people did not cry for mercy. They perished men, women, and children by the hundred thousand and by the million... In the fifth year of the war which was to be over in three months, Japan finds herself bogged in China... She has not destroyed a nation, she has made a nation.China has been hammered in the furnace of pain and sacrifice into one of the great nations of the earth..... The secret of that resurrection is due to the inspired leadership of Chiang Kai-shek."

But to return to the Madame. She is in charge of the air force and is the life and soul of the New Life Movement, which is almost on the lines of our constructive programme—organisation of the villages and villagers, teaching them sanitation, hygiene, orderliness and cleanliness, freedom from vice and intoxicating drugs and liquors, and so on.

In life and in work the Madame and her husband are inseparable, a common revolutionary urge and a common ambition to save their country being the real indissoluble bond between them—as was the case between Lenin and his wife, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his wife (who, by the by, is Madame Chiang Kai-shek's elder sister).

Generalissimo's Philosophy of Action

Those are the bare facts of their life. Though they stayed nearly five hours at Birla House, the interview was all too brief. Both the Generalissimo and Gandhiji were talking against time. Besides, the Generalissimo's sole preoccupation is the winning of the war, and therefore beyond his inflexible will and the grim determination that you find almost written in his iron frame and chiselled features as also in the slow and deliberate manner of his talk, sometimes lit up by an almost imperceptible smile, you can get no inkling of his philosophy of action from his talk. What is of tremendous importance to us, who are in the same case as China, is this philosophy. Thanks to the China Information Bureau, Gandhiji had with him a pamphlet issued by them entitled *A Philosophy of Action* by the Generalissimo. The pamphlet was put into his hands by Pyarelal who thought he should read it before meeting the Generalissimo. The translation from the Chinese is

by the Madame, as I found out from her, who said that infinite pains were taken over the preparation of this great document. The faithful interpreter has appended a brief foreword and notes to this "speech given by a man equal in stature to the tremendous scene speaking quietly in an age of lone desolation", and has shown by means of these learned notes that when the head of revolutionary China "expounds the philosophical basis for the revolution, we find in his mouth the words of the ancients."

It may sound strange — though it need not, inasmuch as ancient Chinese wisdom and ancient Indian wisdom are very nearly identical — but it is a fact that the philosophy of action expounded in this lecture is practically the same as the philosophy of the Gita. "Work or action is life," says the Generalissimo, and adds that "when we speak of action, we should mean action performed in the service of life, i. e. the life of mankind." "No one," says the Gita, "stays for a moment without action; everyone is made to act by the very essence of his nature." (3. 5) Says the Generalissimo: "From birth to death, while he is subject to space and time, a man cannot withdraw himself from the sphere of action; he grows up in action and his character is formed and elevated by action." Again, "perform," says the Gita, "work determined for thyself;" "thou shalt not attain sin if thou performest action determined by thy own nature." (18.47) "We need only concern ourselves," says the Generalissimo, "as to whether what is done is in harmony with the laws of man's innate character . . . The action of which I have been speaking is the operation of man's innate faculties according to the true natural laws of his being." This action — selfless, detached action for the good of the world — is the law as much of our being as of Nature. The Gita sternly says: "He who does not turn the wheel thus revolving leads a sinful life of ease, he lives in vain." (3.16) Says the Generalissimo: "Such motion as that of the revolving globe we ought not to call mere motion; that ceaseless axial and orbital rotation is a phenomenon called in ancient times the activity of nature; and it may serve as the best possible illustration of the qualities of action."

Here comes a distinction which the Generalissimo has drawn between right action (what we might call *yajna* or selfless action, in the language of the Gita) and wrong action, inaction or quiescence, or mere futile motion. It is a luminous passage which I am tempted to quote at some length: "Action differs from motion. Action is continuous, whereas motion is intermittent; action is spontaneous, whereas motion is usually due to the application of external force. Action is in response to the supreme order of things and in harmony with the nature of man. Motion is impulsive response to some fortuitous external stimulus . . . As an illustration, action may be compared to a ceaseless flow of water, in the words of Confucius, 'racing on, unpausing day and night'. Motion on the other hand may be compared to the impact of a stone upon water into which it is thrown. The water is violently

agitated and leaps high into the air; its movement is tumultuous while it lasts, but subsides when after a moment or so the extraneous force that caused it is expended. Such motion is therefore transitory, simply because the motive force comes from without." Another picturesque simile revealing the peculiar genius of the Chinese language: "A man who lives by passion and impulse, who *moves* rather than acts, is like a bell, which when struck vibrates and emits sound but unless struck is silent." The man who does not know the essence of right action, says the Gita, is swayed by the triple passions of lust, anger and greed, but the man of equipoise and right understanding "acts and enjoys life through Self, is satisfied through Self, and is content through Self." (3.17) He does not act, he is in repose. But repose is not quiescence or inaction. "Repose can have a positive function," says the Generalissimo. "What I call the philosophy of action permits of no distinction between motion and repose, a distinction which is superficial." In the Gita says the Lord: "I am always in sleepless, ceaseless action" (3. 23), and yet it is repose. As the Madame says in her notes: "A suitable image would be that of the spinning top or gyroscope, which achieves equilibrium by virtue of the very speed of its rotation, and attains in fact a repose which in the case of the top is colloquially so quaintly but forcibly described as its sleeping." Or in the language of the Chinese philosopher quoted by the Generalissimo, Tseng Kuo-fan: "There is no question of shutting oneself up in oneself and turning one's mind to dead ash. That is not true repose at all; in fact, any such state of mind may be converted into bewildered agitation by some fortuitous cause of disturbance."

And then the Gita teaching of acting without an eye to the result finds a beautiful echo in these words of the Generalissimo: "We are, everyone, men born of woman and passing our days between heaven and earth; not for us to vex ourselves with fear of failure, the only failure is in failing to act."

The last but the most important point. The spring of right action is right knowledge,—compare the whole of the second discourse of the Gita dealing with right knowledge,—and then, says the Generalissimo: "Just as action proceeds from knowledge, action in its turn engenders knowledge. . . . In all our undertakings practice will yield us true knowledge, and action alone will give us the ability to extend and enrich our knowledge." (Cf. Gita, 4.33; 18.57; 10.10.) — *Buddhiyoga* in these references being the word corresponding to knowledge.

To one who has grasped this gospel the rest of the message will be crystal clear. "Work is indeed life; unless a man be totally incapable, he will inevitably require the means of expression for his abilities, and particularly such expression as will accrue to the benefit of somebody beyond himself. Even a little child is conscious of the intense satisfaction to be derived from doing one's best in the service of others. Though no praise be awarded the child, it is aware of an extraordinary complaisance within

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HARIJAN

Mar. 1

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CRIMINAL ASSAULTS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The whole world is on trial today. No one can escape from the war. Whilst the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are products of poets' imagination, their authors were not mere rhymsters. They were seers. What they depicted is happening before our very eyes today. Ravana is warring with each other. They are showing matchless strength. They throw their deadly weapons from the air. No deed of bravery in the battlefield is beyond their capacity or imagination.

Man would not fight in this manner, certainly not the gods. Only brutes can. Soldiers drunk with the pride of physical strength loot shops and are not even ashamed to take liberties with women. The administration is powerless in war time to prevent such happenings. The army fulfils their primary need, and they wink the eye at their misdeeds. Where a whole nation is militarised the way of military life becomes part and parcel of its civilisation. Therefore a soldier's taking such liberties is not a matter for condemnation. But it would take generations for India to become so.

Hence arise questions like the following which a sister sends me:

"(1) If a soldier commits an assault on a woman, can she be said to have lost her virtue?

(2) Is such a woman to be condemned and ostracised by society?

(3) What should women and the public do under such circumstances?"

Whilst the woman has in point of fact lost her virtue, the loss cannot in any way render her liable to be condemned or treated as an outcast. She is entitled to our sympathy for she has been cruelly injured, and we should tend her wounds as we would those of any injured person.

A woman is worthy of condemnation only when she is a willing party to her dishonour. In no case are adultery and criminal assault synonymous terms. If we were to view the matter in this light, we would not hide such instances as has thus far been our wont. Public opinion against such conduct on the part of men towards women would then be created and freely exercised.

If the press carried on a sustained agitation, soldiers white or brown would probably cease to behave in this manner. Their officers would be compelled to prevent such misbehaviour.

My advice to women is that they should leave the cities and migrate to the villages where a wide field of service awaits them. There is comparatively little risk of their being assaulted in villages. They must, however, live simple lives and make themselves one with the poor. If they will display their wealth by dressing in silks and satins and wearing

jewellery, they will, in running away from one danger, expose themselves to a double. Naturally the advice cannot refer to those whom duty compels to live in cities.

The main thing, however, is for women to know how to be fearless. It is my firm conviction that a fearless woman who knows that her purity is her best shield can never be dishonoured. However beastly the man, he will bow in shame before the flame of her dazzling purity. There are examples even in modern times of women who have thus defended themselves. I can, as I write, recall two such instances. I therefore recommend women who read this article to try to cultivate this courage. They will become wholly fearless, if they can and cease to tremble as they do today at the mere thought of assaults. It is not, however, necessary for a woman to go through a bitter experience for the sake of passing a test of courage. These experiences mercifully do not come in the way of lakhs or even thousands. Every soldier is not a beast. It is a minority that loses all sense of decency. Only twenty per cent of snakes are poisonous, and out of these a few only bite. They do not attack unless trodden on. But this knowledge does not help those who are full of fear and tremble at the sight of a snake. Parents and husbands should, therefore, instruct women in the art of becoming fearless. It can best be learnt from a living faith in God. Though He is invisible, He is one's unfailing protector. He who has this faith is the most fearless of all.

But such faith or courage cannot be acquired in a day. Meantime we must try to explore other means. When a woman is assaulted she may not stop to think in terms of himsa or ahimsa. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method or means that come to her mind in order to defend her honour. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and, if need be, die in the effort. The man or woman who has shed all fear of death will be able not only to protect himself or herself but others also through laying down his life. In truth we fear death most, and hence we ultimately submit to superior physical force. Some will bend the knee to the invader, some will resort to bribery, some will crawl on their bellies or submit to other forms of humiliation, and some women will even give their bodies rather than die. I have not written this in a carping spirit. I am only illustrating human nature. Whether we crawl on our bellies or whether a woman yields to the lust of man is symbolic of that same love of life which makes us stoop to anything. Therefore only he who loses his life shall save it; तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः । Every reader should commit this matchless shloka to memory. But mere lip loyalty to it will be of no avail. It must penetrate deep down to the innermost recesses of his heart. To enjoy life one should give up the lure of life. That should be part of our nature.

So much for what a woman should do. But what about a man who is witness to such crimes? The answer is implied in the foregoing. He must

not be a passive onlooker. He must protect the woman. He must not run for police help; he must not rest satisfied by pulling the alarm chain in the train. If he is able to practise non-violence, he will die in doing so and thus save the woman in jeopardy. If he does not believe in non-violence or cannot practise it, he must try to save her by using all the force he may have. In either way there must be readiness on his part to lay down his life.

If old, decrepit and toothless, as I am, I were to plead non-violence and be a helpless witness of assault on the honour of a sister, my so-called Mahatmaship would be ridiculed, dishonoured and lost. If I or those like me were to intervene and lay down our lives whether violently or non-violently, we would surely save the prey and at any rate we would not remain living witnesses to her dishonour.

So much about the witnesses. But if the courageous spirit pervades the entire atmosphere of our country and it is known that no Indian will stand women being assaulted, I venture to say that no soldier will dare to touch them. That such a spirit does not exist is a matter of shame for us. But it will be something, if persons ready to wipe out this blot are forthcoming.

Those who have influence with the Government will try to get the authorities to take the necessary action. But self-help is best help. In the present circumstances we may rely only on our own strength and God's help.

On the train to Wardha, 19-2-42

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

A LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A Bengali correspondent writes:

"I am sorry to inform you that Dr. Suresh Bannerji has been interned within Naria P. S. in the district of Faridpur. Naria is his village home; but nobody lives in the village house and there is no qualified medical man available in the vicinity. The nearest steamer station is 20 miles from the village, where the conveyance is a country boat. Internment without trial is bad enough, but the present order savours even of vindictiveness. At first a gagging order was served on him in December last, whereby he was asked not to deliver any speech or conduct any procession. That was in the last week of December. He did not defy the order. After that there was a labour strike in the Budge Budge jute mill area. Labourers wanted dearness allowance, and I believe that demand was justified. If Dr. Bannerji's stay in the labour area was undesirable in the opinion of the Government, they could have externed him from the labour area.

There is another case also which you should know. Shri Pitabas Das, of village Kakra, post Gopinathpur in the Contai sub-division of Midnapur, has been interned in his village. He had been offering satyagraha for nine months and was moving from village to village and uttered the slogan as usual. He was not arrested. He stopped satyagraha on 30th December after the Bardoli resolution. Then on the 23rd of January, he was served with an internment order to reside within his village and not to communicate or

converse with several Congressmen. Before joining the satyagraha movement he and his wife together were doing khadi work. When he joined satyagraha his wife was in full charge of the khadi work and conducted it very efficiently. There is not a single village in Bengal where so many people use khadi. Out of a total population of 3,000 there are about 1,000 khadi wearers in that village. I cannot understand why a man who was not arrested for reciting the anti-war slogan for months together is interned under the Defence of India Rules as soon as he stops satyagraha. I know Pitabas Babu thoroughly well. He is perfectly non-violent. I cannot understand this action of the Bengal Government which is supposed to depend for its existence upon the vote of Congressmen who are in the legislature."

The action against Dr. Suresh Bannerji is decidedly cruel. Vindictive may be a strong word to use in this connection. I prefer to use the word cruel, for Suresh Babu is not an unknown man. He is himself a member of the Bengal legislature. He is known to be an ill man. He was dying of tuberculosis of the bone. But by his indomitable will to live, not for the sake of living but for the sake of the country, he survived the fell disease. He put himself in a plaster of Paris jacket for a long time, rigorously carried out medical instructions, and reached a workable condition. All this is known to the Bengal Government. They know that he needs constant medical advice. He needs careful nursing and the use of medical amenities. It is therefore cruel to intern Dr. Bannerji. I do not know how far the Bengal Government are justified in externing the doctor. I do not know their side of the case. But there can be no case for his internment, and that in a place, though his own village, where he cannot keep his health and where medical aid and other comforts are not easily procurable. I do hope that the Bengal Government will redress this palpable grievance.

The other case my correspondent refers to is of a different category. To all intents and purposes there seems to be no cause for the internment of Pitabas Babu. The Bengal Government is responsible to the people. The order could not have been passed over their heads by the Governor. They cannot enforce the Defence of India Act in an arbitrary manner. They must justify to the public every action they take. The Assembly, if it is to justify its existence, has to keep itself informed of the reasons for the acts of the responsible executive. The taunt of the correspondent against the Congress members of the Bengal legislature has substance behind it. They have a special reason to demand justification of steps like those taken against Suresh Babu and Pitabas Babu.

On the train to Wardha, 19-2-42

To Agents

The attention of the agents is drawn to the agency term No. 1 about maintaining with us a deposit equivalent to at least the price of one month's copies required by them. This rule will be strictly observed, and the supply to defaulters will be stopped at once.

A HISTORIC MEETING

(Continued from p. 59)

itself. . . . Life from childhood to old age is the energetic, ceaseless use of our faculties at first chiefly for the satisfaction of the needs of one's own existence, to secure one's own footing in life, but next, as one's mental perspective broadens, the family, the village, the community, the nation, and mankind become objects of the desire to express oneself and give of oneself. . . . A man worthy of his place in the ranks of the Revolution will regard as nothing extraordinary difficulties and dangers that would daunt others. His revolutionary spirit, which is the very spirit of action, gives him a sublime indifference to whatever may be the magnitude of the demands his duty makes upon him; whatever his principles, faith and responsibility involve is "all in the day's work" for him, though it be ordeal by fire and water or the abnegation of everything dearest to him. He takes no account of difficulty, and fear is a thing still stranger to him. It is in the sense that to a man with such an attitude action is *easy* that I use the word." And in the great words of Tseng Kuo-fan he sounds a homely warning: "Again and again have you been delinquent in your duties and endeavours, and been swayed by material possessions; but no one has ever heard of your being unpunctual at meal-times!"

These, if I may say so, read almost as though they were paragraphs from *Harijan* or *Young India*. And naturally, because the Generalissimo's business, like Gandhiji's, "for 99.9 per cent of his time, is to practise, not preach" (Madame).

The Talk

But, the reader will impatiently exclaim, what about the talks? Two passengers asked Gandhiji at the Howrah station, "Have you arrived at some settlement?" As though Gandhiji had gone to strike some bargain or arrive at some settlement with him! There was no such thing in the mind of either. All they wanted to do was to know and understand each other, and that they have been able to do somewhat. I say "somewhat". For part of the time was taken up by Gandhiji in explaining the genesis and course of satyagraha and non-cooperation, and also in demonstrating to the Generalissimo and the Madame the action of his "weapon of war"—a weapon which, as he explained, "makes no noise, which does not kill, but which, if anything, gives life." The Madame watched the working of the dhanush takli and said: "You will have to teach me this." "Come to Sevagram, and I shall teach it to you. Let the Generalissimo leave you here as his ambassador, and I adopt you as my daughter." He could speak thus intimately to them as he had already at the end of the day developed those relations with them. For half an hour or so the official interpreter who accompanied the Generalissimo interpreted him. Then, said Gandhiji: "But surely ours is not a formal official talk. Why should not the Madame interpret you?" "Now, now, Mahatmaji, that is devastating," she said. "Now I know how everyone succumbs to you.

My husband is most taxing. Whenever there is something very difficult to interpret, some delicate nuances of his thought to be conveyed, I must interpret him. But for one year I have been having an easy time asking the official interpreter to do it for me." "That means that you are a faithless wife," said Gandhiji laughing. "Surely," retorted the Madame. "He did not marry an interpreter, he married a woman." And so on, and so forth. No wonder at the end of the first talk the Madame said: "I have met too many men to succumb to anyone. But the Mahatma has captivated me." The rest of the talk had better be guessed. The Generalissimo was sure that non-cooperation was good for India, but he was not sure that it would serve equally well for other countries—unless of course they were like India in their circumstances and environments. He was naturally full of indignation at what Japan had done and was doing in China, and he had grave fears of India having to go through China's terrible fate if the Japanese overran India. It was not possible for Gandhiji to discuss the whole of our non-violent technique, but he left the Generalissimo in no doubt that Japan or Germany would be confronted with fierce non-cooperation or civil resistance. "Your civil resistance," said the Generalissimo, "is not mere passivity, I am sure. But these foes may not listen to active civil resistance, and may make even the preaching of non-violence impossible."

"All I can say," said Gandhiji, "is that God gives me the guidance to react to situations as they arise. Though, therefore, I cannot say how exactly I will react in case of an invasion, I know that God will give me the proper guidance. But this talk cannot, I know, satisfy you. I would invite you to come to Sevagram where we can discuss the subject quietly for days. I know of course that it is an impossible request, for you cannot possibly stay."

"Who knows," said the Madame, "we may be back here sooner than later. And after all Calcutta is only 12 hours from Chungking."

"Then you will pay me a monthly visit," said Gandhiji as he bade a hearty good-bye to the distinguished visitors.

"Where's my wheel?" said the Madame, "where's my wheel?" as she was leaving the Birla Park. It had by mistake been taken to the station along with our other luggage. "You shall have it," said Gandhiji. "I shall send it on to you from the station."

And now the dhanush takli is part of her luggage on her way back to China. She may or may not work it, but it is sure to appeal to the simple and artistic workmanship of China, and will be either copied or improved upon for the poor of that land.

On the train to Wardha, 19-2-42

M. D.

Notice

Intimation of a change of address to be effective for the week should be received by Thursday. The register No. should always be given. *Manager*

Notes

'Harijan' in Marathi

A Marathi edition of *Harijan* will be published from Bajajwadi, Wardha, from March 1st. The subscription will be Rs. 5 per annum. Shri Gopalrao Kale, one of the early members of Satyagrahashram, is the Editor. He will be assisted by Shri Dada Dharmadhikari of *Sarvodaya*. I have advised that the weekly ought not to be published unless it becomes self-supporting. Shri Gopalrao and his associates have accepted the advice. I hope that the venture will be supported by the Marathi reading public.

Sevagram, 23-2-42

Khadi Students

I have been asked to write something in regard to khadi students of today. I have already written a little, but it cannot be too clearly stated nor enough stressed that knowledge of spinning, carding and the other processes alone does not constitute true khadi learning. That may be termed its mechanics. To understand the inner meaning of khadi one has to know why it has to be turned out by hand and not by power machinery. Why should innumerable hands be employed when a single person can manipulate an engine which can produce the same amount of cloth in far less time? If khadi has to be produced by hand, why not by the takli only? And if the takli, why not the bamboo takli? And if we could get the necessary work by suspending yarn by means of a stone, why even a takli? Such questions are perfectly natural. To find proper answers to all such is a necessary part of khadi research. I do not want to discuss these questions here. All I want to say is that true knowledge of khadi goes far beyond the mechanical processes, and requires patient research. We have not the means of imparting such knowledge today. Therefore khadi instructors have to improve their knowledge even whilst they are teaching. And students have to acquire knowledge through their own diligence. In olden times when no scientific knowledge was available students used to be their own teachers and became first rate scholars and experts. We are more or less in the same position today.

(From *Khadi Jagat*)

Sevagram, 22-2-42

M. K. G.

Price Control Anarchy

A correspondent, who is fully conversant with the situation regarding price control obtaining in various parts of the country, writes:

"I have read your article on 'Price Control' in *Harijan* of the 8th inst.

The position with regard to wheat supplies in Calcutta continues to be very acute. I am mentioning some facts below:

While the controlled price in Punjab and U. P. is fixed at Rs. 4-6-0 per maund, the wholesale selling price in Bengal is fixed by the Provincial Controller at Rs. 5-12-0. This difference of Rs. 1-6-0 does not leave sufficient margin for the importer who has to incur about Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 1-9-0 per maund as charges in respect of freight, bags, handling, shortage,

interest, etc. The result has been that importers are not at all interested in importing wheat in Bengal. Of course at present the difficulty has been aggravated by the action of the Government of Punjab in placing a restriction on the export of wheat from that province and also due to shortage of railway wagons. It is understood that out of about 7 to 8 thousand *chakkis* in the city less than 500 are working at present.

The Statesman has been carrying on a ceaseless propaganda against those leaving Calcutta but, leaving aside the first rush created by genuine panic just after the declaration of war by Japan, one of the main reasons why the poorer classes are now leaving Calcutta is that they are unable to get foodstuffs at reasonable rates owing to shortage.

I have also received reports from certain upcountry teachers employed in our schools here in Harijan bustees, which had to be closed down owing to the emergency, that in certain U. P. districts no wheat is available, and that the worst quality of rice is being sold at Rs. 8 per maund owing to scarcity.

You have referred in *Harijan* to the Price Control Conference which was held in Delhi in the first week of February. That Conference is a purely official gathering convened from time to time by the Commerce Member, and does not include any representatives of non-official public or the mercantile community."

The sooner this anarchy is ended the better. I know that the Price Control Conference is a purely official body, but if the Conference is to serve the interests of the poor by keeping in touch with the realities of the situation and acquainting itself from time to time with the effects of the policy pursued by Government, it is its duty to consult representatives of the non-official mercantile community.

Sevagram, 22-2-42

M. D.

A Sister's Tribute

The beautiful tributes that will be paid to the memory of Shri Jamnalalji will be as universal as the sorrow that is felt all over the country. To know him was to love him. A kindlier and more sympathetic personality it is difficult to imagine.

Amongst his many labours for the cause of social reform—for he was primarily an ardent reformer—his bold stand for the woman's cause deserves special mention. He belonged to a community, singularly conservative in its ideas regarding women's rights. But, as in so many other things in his own life, he fearlessly brought about drastic changes in this sphere in his family circle. His task was not an easy one. He told me he found it difficult to make Shrimati Jankibai give up certain old customs, but his faith in the woman's cause was undaunted and he won through. He gave his daughters the same opportunities for education as he did to his sons; in the matter of marriage he gave them liberty of choice, and he gave them dowries to make them economically independent. The Mahila Ashram, Wardha, was, perhaps, the institution dearest to his heart among the many that he has founded. He often told me that he wanted to see women doing well in every sphere of life, that he wanted them to become fearless, to lead simple lives, to devote

themselves to the service of the country, and to be able to hold their own against men. Women have lost a very doughty champion in Jamnalalji. But we have not really lost him. His example is there for all time as also his blessings. It remains for us to make ourselves worthy examples of the high ideals which he had for womankind.

Sevagram, 12-2-42

Gleanings from A. I. V. I. A. Minutes

Shri Jairamdas Daulatram has been co-opted as a member of the Board. The Board has equipped the children's playground in front of the Udyog Bhavan, Wardha, with swings, see-saws, etc., at a cost of Rs. 89-6-0. This is in keeping with the Association's ideal for its centres to render service to all their neighbours. There were 214 ordinary members, 28 agents and 29 certified shops on the rolls of the Association on December 31st 1941. At the request of Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai to afford facilities for training women workers, the Board decided to train women who have passed the spinning examination of the A. I. S. A. and are likely to make use of their training in future. Scholarships to deserving women will in future be awarded on the same basis as to men.

Savagram, 19-2-42

A. K.

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Hindustani

Q. Will you tell me what I should do? You should know that I believe in the Wardha resolution.

A. That is to say, you believe that, if the Congress demand is satisfied, you will take your full share in the war effort. But whatever happens the Wardha resolution on the constructive programme invites you to contribute your full quota to the fourteenfold constructive programme. Therefore, and even apart from it, I suggest your learning Hindustani so as to be able to establish contact with the masses. And Hindustani, as I have shown, means today Hindi and Urdu till a chemical compound is formed of the two. You may not quarrel with this labour of love. Your earnestness will make everything easy. You know some Hindi. You should make considerable advance in it. The Persian script is very easy to learn. There are very few fundamental signs to represent thirtyseven letters. No doubt the joining of the letters causes some difficulty, but learning of the alphabet including the joining is a matter of a week at the most, if you give one hour every day. Then it is a question of daily practice for half an hour, and you will have a workable knowledge of Urdu in six months. Surely it is a fascinating study to compare the two scripts and the two styles for the same speech. All this would be true, if you have love of the country and its people. If our minds were not fatigued by the effort to master the difficult English language, we should find it a light labour, or rather recreation, to study provincial languages.

But the learning of Hindustani in its double form is but the beginning of the constructive

programme. You have also to spin regularly, if you are to identify yourself with the poorest in the land, and then add to this the many things in the programme whose complete fulfilment is Complete Independence in the truest sense of the word.

Test of Honesty?

Q. What you have said about Congressmen in the Muslim majority provinces is true enough. But your honesty will be tested by the readiness with which Congressmen follow your advice.

A. I must emphatically repudiate the test. I have begun to write about the subject in order to educate the Congress mind. If I had carried conviction to the members of the Working Committee, I would not have needed to preach my solution. It would have been reduced to practice long ago. But I failed. The step I have advised carries weighty implications without whose acceptance the solution has no meaning. One implication is confidence in the truth of one's step. I admit it is unusual. The general tendency is to make use of the opportunities which seem to be open to you for seizing power. It is difficult for people to understand when I suggest that the opportunity is a trap. To my mind it has already proved to be so. But it is not clear to the average Congressman. I hope through these columns to make clear what is at present obscure. Those who doubt my honesty do not help me or themselves. But whether they do or not, I must continue to preach so long as I hold to the truth of my solution.

On the train to Wardha, 19-2-42

How to Serve with the Body?

Q. You say we should devote our body, intellect and wealth to Jamnalalji's many activities. I can understand giving and to some extent I can understand how we can serve with our intellect. But how with the body?

A. A's heart may lean towards cow service or khadi. But he has no money, he has to earn his own living, then how can he spare time for either service? When he can spare a few moments after his day's work he can persuade his friends to become members of the Goseva Sangh. He can sell and distribute literature without charge; he can do propaganda for and sell cow's milk and ghee or sandals made from non-violent cow hide; he can sell khadi too. If he wants to devote his whole life to the cause, he can do so by entering on a living wage the service of the Sanghs concerned.

Sevagram, 23-2-42

(From Harijansevak)

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